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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2008). *Newsroom*. 321.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/321>

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Georgia Southern University hosts Georgia Boys State and Georgia Girls State

JUNE 8, 2008



More than 800 high school seniors from across the state are on Georgia Southern University's campus beginning this week to take part in the weeklong Georgia Boys State and Georgia Girls State. From arrival to departure, they will be immersed in this annual interactive program that teaches the fundamental principles and procedures of city, county, and state government under the American system.

This year's Boys State, sponsored by the American Legion, will take place June 8-14. It has been held at Georgia Southern University for nearly 30 years. Girls State, sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, is scheduled for June 8-13. It has been held at the University for more than 10 years. While both groups meet at the Nessmith-Lane building, their instruction, their activities, and their events remain separate.

Special guests who will address gatherings of both Boys and Girls State include Georgia Secretary of State Karen Handel, Georgia Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox, Superior Court Judge Cynthia Becker, James Donald, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Corrections, and Rep. Jack Hill.

"We truly enjoy hosting Georgia Boys State and Georgia Girls State on the campus of Georgia Southern," said Russell Keen, director of government relations for Georgia Southern University.

"These outstanding young men and women not only have the opportunity to learn a lot about the political system, but get to live and learn at a University before they complete their high school education."

During their week of instruction, participants in Boys and Girls State simulate a 51st state, using campaigning and elections to develop township, city, county, and state governments. While learning about the rights, privileges, and duties of citizenship, the students take part in legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement presentations, assemblies, and recreational programs. In addition to electing their local officials, they elect a Governor. Sponsors and invited officials interview potential candidates and select two student 'senators' to represent the state at Boys and Girls Nation in Washington, D.C.

High school juniors are selected by their local American Legion Posts to attend Boys and Girls State in the summer between their junior and senior years, and in most cases, the students selected are in the top 10 percent of their school class. The sponsoring American Legion Post pays the costs for their students to participate. Attendance at Boys and Girls State becomes part of an individual's permanent resume, and in some cases has led to future public office. During the week,

approximately 100 of the students attending will successfully complete an Honors Test, which provides a basis for some of the achievement awards presented at the end of the week.

'I keep hearing about how young people are not interested in our future," said Phil Youngblood, Boys State director. 'When we select delegates to Georgia Boys State and Georgia Girls State and see what they have already accomplished, we know that our future is very bright. This week truly does become a Week that Shapes a Lifetime,' not only for the delegates, but the staff as well."

Boys and Girls State could not exist without a dedicated group of volunteers to provide instruction and guidance for the week's activities. American Legion members, law enforcement officers, veterans, city, county, and state officials, and school counselors. The housing, food, and other arrangements for the week are overseen by Georgia Southern's Continuing Education Department under the direction of Deborah Champion.

More information about Georgia Boys State 2008 is at: www.gaboysstate.com.

More information about Georgia Girls State 2008 is at: www.georgiagirlsstate.org.

– See more at: <http://news.georgiasouthern.edu/pressrelease.php?id=1661#sthash.EJMt21yD.dpuf>